

ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
March 14, 2025 at 12:00 pm

This meeting was conducted in a hybrid format. School Committee, Administrators and the public had the option of meeting in person at Rochester Memorial School or via zoom.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Sharon Hartley (in-person), Katherine Duggan (remote), Anne Fernandes (in-person), Robin Rounseville (in-person) and Joshua Trombly (in-person).

ABSENT: None

ADMINISTRATORS: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools; Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations; Shari Fedorowicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; Jaime Curley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services; and Heidi Letendre, Principal.

OTHERS PRESENT: Cameron Durant, Town Administrator

Ms. Hartley called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

Superintendent Nelson informed the school committee that a meeting was held earlier this week with Town Administrator, Cameron Durant, Finance Director, Suzanne Szyndlar, Mr. Barber and himself to discuss the 2025-2026 proposed budget for Rochester Memorial School. At this meeting, they discussed the proposed \$7,611,882 as last reviewed by the school committee. Town officials expressed the need to reduce the proposed budget by \$360,000. He shared Mr. Durant and Ms. Szyndlar are supportive of a one-time article outside of the operating budget to support a three year license for new math curriculum at \$70,000 and recommended a separate item of \$300,000 to support special education expenses as was done last year. Although all parties agreed this is 'kicking the can' down the road for a recurring expense, Superintendent Nelson supported this at this time, in order to reduce the overall proposed budget. Lastly, he recommended not filling the full-time academic interventionist position, which is vacant due to a retirement. Principal Heidi Letendre supported this as to minimize impact of reductions on positions of current staff.

Mr. Durant, Town Administrator, shared that the school district was asked to reduce about \$360,000 and the Town will be reducing by a similar amount throughout its departments. He explained the Town is seeing similar increased expenses in health insurance, mandated expenses, liability insurance and more.

School Committee Feedback:

The School Committee thanked Mr. Durant for attending the meeting. Ms. Duggan expressed concerns for the fiscal longevity for the Town. Superintendent Nelson shared that he and many others met with state representatives on Monday when they were in Rochester to share concerns. Ms. Fernandes shared wanting to make sure the faculty and staff know the school committee supports them and these are tricky times financially.

Motion by Ms. Rounseville to support not filling the academic interventionist position and cutting \$300,000 from the operating budget to put in a one-time article at Town Meeting instead

Motion Seconded by Ms. Fernandes

Motion Passed 5-0

Roll Call: Hartley (yes); Fernandes (yes); Duggan (yes); Rounseville (yes); Trombly (yes)

Meeting was adjourned at 12:47 p.m.

Motion by Ms. Rounseville

Motion Seconded by Ms. Fernandes

Motion Passed 5-0

Roll Call: Hartley (yes); Fernandes (yes); Duggan (yes); Rounseville (yes); Trombly (yes)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M~N~".

Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools